

Message Text

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S E C R E T ANKARA 1589

EXDIS

FOR SISCO AND HARTMAN FROM MACOMBER

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, TU

SUBJECT: PROSPECTS FOR U.S./TURKISH DEFENSE AGREEMENT

1. SINCE RETURNING TO ANKARA, MY CONCERNS FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE RESCHEDULED 24-25 MARCH CAGLAYANGIL VISIT TO WASHINGTON HAVE INCREASED RATHER THAN DIMINISHED. WHILE CERTAIN DIFFICULT TECHNICAL ISSUES OF THE PROPOSED NEW SECURITY AGREEMENT REMAIN IN DISPUTE, THESE ARE OF A CHARACTER WHICH WOULD NOT REPEAT NOT JEOPARDIZE THE AGREEMENT'S SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION. HOWEVER, THREE KEY PROBLEMS REMAIN IN THE PICTURE, WHICH, EITHER IN COMBINATION OR SEPARATELY, SERIOUSLY THREATEN TO ABORT THE CURRENT EFFORTS TO RESTORE THE U.S./TURKISH SECURITY RELATIONSHIP.

2. THE FIRST HAS TO DO WITH THE PROJECTED LEVEL OF U.S. DEFENSE SUPPORT. THE GAP BETWEEN THE OUTER LIMITS OF WHAT WE CAN REALISTICALLY OFFER ON THE ONE HAND, AND WHAT THE TURKS EXPECT ON THE OTHER, IS A VERY SERIOUS ONE, AND IT REMAINS UNCLEAR:

A) WHETHER WE WILL BE ABLE TO COME UP WITH SOME IMPRESSIVE SWEETENERS WHICH HAVE A REAL CHANCE OF BRIDGING THIS GAP;
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B) WHETHER, EVEN IF WE DO, THERE WILL BE SUFFICIENT REALISM IN TURKISH THINKING TO PERMIT THEM TO ABANDON THEIR IMPRACTICAL AMBITIONS IN THIS AREA.

3. MY SECOND CONCERN IS, IN EFFECT, A SUB CONCERN OF THE FIRST. EVEN IF WE CAN GET LEVELS OF ASSISTANCE ADEQUATELY AGREED UPON, THE TURKS CONTINUE TO BE UNREALISTIC REGARDING THE PORTIONS OF THAT ASSISTANCE WHICH WOULD COME TO THEM IN THE FORM OF GRANT AID. GOADED BY THE LEVEL OF GRANT ASSISTANCE THEY SEE GOING TO ISRAEL AND BY A DETERIORATING ECONOMIC PICTURE AT HOME, THE TURKS HAVE REVIVED WHAT UNTIL RECENTLY HAD BEEN A DECLINING APPETITE FOR THIS FORM OF AID.

4. I WOULD BE REASONABLY CONFIDENT THAT THROUGH HARD, INTENSE NEGOTIATIONS THESE TWO CONCERNS COULD BE SURMOUNTED BEFORE AND DURING CAGLAYANGIL'S WASHINGTON VISIT, IF IT WERE NOT FOR A THIRD CONCERN WHICH IS BECOMING AN INCREASINGLY DOMINANT ONE HERE.

5. NO GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL HAS YET SAID TO ME DIRECTLY THAT THERE WILL BE NO REPEAT NO AGREEMENT AS LONG AS ANY VESTIGE OF THE CONGRESSIONAL EMBARGO REMAINS ON THE BOOKS, BUT THIS IS THE VIEW THAT IS NOW CIRCULATING WIDELY IN GOVERNMENT AND PRESS CIRCLES. IT IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY IMPLICIT IN WHAT THE PRESIDENT, PRIME MINISTER AND FOREIGN MINISTER ARE SAYING PRIVATELY TO OTHERS. AND MANY OF MY CONTACTS IN THE PRESS ARE NOW TELLING ME THAT THEY ARE CONVINCED THAT THERE WILL, IN FACT, BE NO AGREEMENT AS LONG AS ANY PORTION OF THE EMBARGO (AND BY "EMBARGO" THEY MEAN ANY CONGRESSIONAL DISCRIMINATORY LEGISLATION AIMED SPECIFICALLY AT TURKEY) REMAINS ON THE BOOKS.

6. WITH RESPECT TO DEMIREL, WHILE HIS POSITION IS NOT YET COMPLETELY RIGID, IT IS CLEAR TO ME THAT HE HAS STRONG EMOTIONAL FEELINGS ON THIS SUBJECT. (HOW CAN WE ENTER INTO A NEW SECURITY RELATIONSHIP WITH THESE PEOPLE WHO STILL HAVE A KNIFE AT OUR THROATS?") I SUSPECT, HOWEVER, THAT HE IS ALSO BECOMING

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INCREASINGLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE ABILITY OF HIS RIGHTWING COALITION PARTNER, NECMETTIN ERBAKAN TO MAKE MAJOR POLITICAL CAPITAL AGAINST HIM IF HE PERMITS PRESENTLY SUSPENDED U.S. ACTIVITIES TO BE REACTIVATED WHILE ANY PORTION OF THE EMBARGO REAMINS IN FORCE.

7. DESPITE THE DISCOURAGING PURPORT OF THE ABOVE

PARAGRAPHS, I DO NOT SEE THAT WE CAN PROCEED ON THE U.S. SIDE MUCH DIFFERENTLY THAN WE ARE NOW. WE MUST CONTINUE BOTH IN WASHINGTON AND IN ANKARA TO TRY TO GET TURKEY TO UNDERSTAND THE REALITIES OF THE SITUATION, I.E. THAT THEIR OWN NATIONAL INTERESTS REQUIRE THEM TO ACCEPT WHAT IS PRACTICABLE WITH RESPECT BOTH TO DEFENSE SUPPORT LEVELS AND THE U.S. LEGISLATIVE PROCESS. AT THE SAME TIME, WE MUST MAKE IT CRYSTAL CLEAR TO THE CONGRESS THAT THE CURRENT LEGISLATION, DESPITE WHAT HAS BEEN SAID ABOUT ITS BEING AN IMPROVEMENT OVER THAT OF THE PAST YEAR, RUNS A MAJOR RISK OF ABORTING THE CURRENT EFFORT TO RESTORE THE U.S./ TURKISH SECURITY RELATIONSHIP. IT MUST ALSO BE MADE CLEAR TO THE CONGRESS -- CYPRUS DISAPPOINTMENTS NOTWITHSTANDING -- THAT WITH RESPECT TO U.S. SECURITY INTERESTS IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD, A GREAT DEAL IS RIDING ON THIS CURRENT EFFORT; THAT TIME IS RUNNING OUT HERE; AND, THAT FAILURE OF THE CURRENT EFFORT IS LIKELY TO END HOPES OF REBUILDING OUR RELATIONSHIP WITHIN AN ACCEPTABLE TIME FRAME -- AND BEFORE ADDITIONAL CRITICAL AND LASTING DAMAGE IS DONE. I BELIEVE IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT BOTH OUR FRIENDS AND OUR OPPONENTS IN CONGRESS NOT REPEAT NOT BE IN A POSITION TO SAY LATER THAT WE MISLED THEM ON THIS KEY POINT.

8. DESPITE THE PESSIMISM OF THIS MESSAGE, I HAVE NOT YET, BY ANY MEANS, ABANDONED HOPE FOR A SUCCESSFUL WASHINGTON VISIT NEXT MONTH BY CAGLAYANGIL. THERE IS STILL A CHANCE THAT HE WILL COME, THAT A NEW AGREEMENT WILL BE SIGNED, AND THAT WE CAN SIMULTANEOUSLY OBTAIN HIS ACQUIESCENCE TO THE PROMPT REACTIVATION OF OUR SUSPENDED ACTIVITIES. MORE LIKELY AT THE MOMENT, HOWEVER, IS THE PROSPECT THAT EVEN IF AN AGREEMENT

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IS SIGNED THE GOT WILL NOT PERMIT REACTIVATION UNTIL THAT AGREEMENT HAS BEEN ENDORSED BY THE CONGRESS. CAGLAYANGIL COULD ALSO END UP PROCEEDING WITH HIS TRIP BUT NOT SIGNING AN AGREEMENT AT ITS CONCLUSION. FINALLY, I CANNOT AS OF THIS TIME RULE OUT THAT HE WILL BACK OUT OF THE TRIP ALTOGETHER.

MACOMBER

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